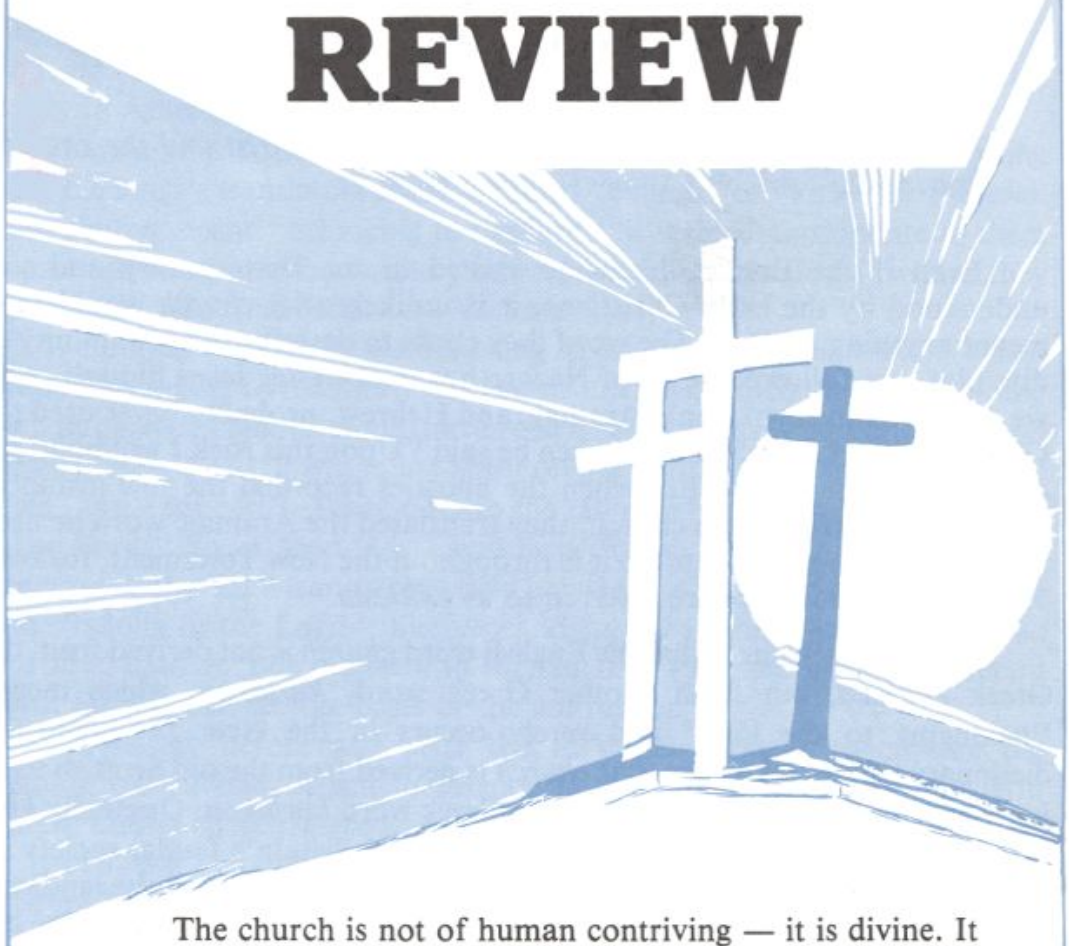
RESTORATION REVIEW



The church is not of human contriving — it is divine. It has ontological reality. Neither is it mortal — it is immortal. "On this rock I will build my church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it." The church represents that point in the creative and redemptive activity of God where he is revealed; and as such it is a continuation of that process of his showing forth of himself which begun when the Word "was in the world, ... yet the world knew him not."—William Robinson, *The Biblical Doctrine of the Church.*

In This Issue:

What Did "Church" Mean in the Early Church

Volume 27, No. 8 Leroy Garrett, Editor October 1985

Volume 27, No. 8 **Leroy Garrett, Editor** **October 1985**

The Adventures of the Early Church …

WHAT DID "CHURCH" MEAN TO THE EARLY CHRISTIANS?

This is a great mystery, and I take it to mean Christ and the church. —Eph. 5:32

Even if the English language existed in the first century and was understood by the early Christians, it is unlikely that *church* would have meant anything to them. The word they chose to describe the community of disciples that followed Jesus of Nazareth was *ekklesia.* Jesus himself, who we may presume spoke only Aramaic and Hebrew, probably never used the Greek word *ekklesia*, not even when he said "Upon this rock I will build my church" (Matt. 16:18). But when the apostles recorded the few instances that Jesus referred to the church, they translated the Aramaic word he used into the word *ekklesia.* And so it is throughout the New Testament, for over 100 times the believers are referred to as *ekklesia.*

What is confusing is that the English word *church* is not derived from the Greek *ekklesia*, but from another Greek word, *kuriakon*, which means "belonging to the lord" and rarely occurs in the New Testament. A dictionary will reveal to you that *church* is derived from the old Scottish term *kirk*, which in turn had its origin in the Greek word *kuriakon.* Originally *kirk* had no ecclesiastical import, for it came out of Britain's feudal society in the Middle Ages and referred to the manor (estate) over which the landlord ruled. So the "kirk" was that which belonged to the lord. The serfs were his subjects and he ruled over them as lord and even judge, holding court in case of disputes.

The "lord of the manor" thus had his *kirk* or *church,* which was his estate or little nation, and it had nothing to do with religion. The law of primogeniture, now repealed, ruled that the estate passed along to the eldest son, who succeeded his father as lord of the manor and head of the kirk. Other sons were left out, so they had to seek other opportunities befitting "the landed gentry," such as marrying a rich woman. This is why some of them followed Columbus to America. They hoped to establish the feudal system in America. These disappointed sons, who were born in the wrong order, hoped to have their own "church" in America! But you now see that this referred to a manor and not to anything religious.

And this was when the King James Bible was translated (1611), named for King James I of England, as was Jamestown (1607), the first English colony in America.

Somehow (It doesn't make much sense even in the light of the foregoing facts) the kings's translators chose the word "church" or "kirk" for *ekklesia.* Since *church* meant "belonging to the lord," it seemed appropriate to them to use that term in reference to those who belonged to Jesus, whom they called Lord, and thus became his community.

If the king's translator were looking at the Greek word *kuriakon,* which means "belonging to the lord," instead of *ekklesia,* which means something else, the choice of *church* would have been more justified. The word *kuriakon* occurs in Rev. 1:10 ("I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day") and 1 Cor. 11:20 ("the Lord's supper"). These refer to the table and to the day that "belongs to the Lord." So, if Matt. 16:18 had read "Upon this rock I will build my *kuriakon"* the KJV translators could have seen it as referring to the people who "belong to the Lord," like *day* and *supper* in the other passages and thus used *church.* But the term in Mt. 16:18 is *ekklesia,* a much different word. So you can see the basis of the confusion.

Translators before and after the KJV have sought to capture the meaning of *ekklesia,* which in essence is "assembly," avoiding the term *church.* Luther chose *congregation,* as did Alexander Campbell, which makes Mt. 16:18 read "Upon this rock I will build my congregation." When Hugh J. Schonfield, that dynamic Jewish scholar, translated the New Testament from the Greek, which he called *The Authentic New Testament,* he not only translated baptism as immersion but rendered *ekklesia* as *community.* Thus 1 Cor. 1:2 reads: "to the community of God at Corinth."

These terms, *congregation* or *community,* get as close to what *ekklesia* means in English as any term that could be selected, unless it is *assembly.* Those old Greek scholars who created the Septuagint (the OT in Greek) used the word *ekklesia* to translate the Hebrew, *qahal,* which is the main word for "assembly" in the Old Testament. This means that when they came to Neh. 8:2, which reads "Ezra the priest brought the law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could hear with understanding," they made it read in Greek that Ezra brought the law before the *ekklesia.* So with Ps. 22:22, where the Septuagint has David saying "In the midst of the *ekklesia* I will praise thee."

This OT usage gives us a clue that *ekklesia* means both an *assembly* and *assembling.* The *ekklesia* is God's assembly even when the covenant people are scattered over a city, but the term implies that the assembly of God assembles in the name of God. Thus the community of God at Corinth was God's assembly even when separated into scores of homes, but the word implies that said community assembled from time to time.

The etymology of *ekklesia* is that it is made up of two words meaning "called out," and we often define *church* to mean this, i. e., the called-out from the world. But it is not likely that the NT writers meant this when they used the term. They more likely meant an assembly (of Christ) that assembles (in the name of Christ). Since the Greeks used the term politically, referring to any political entity that is called together or otherwise assembles, it was necessary for the Christians, when they used *ekklesia* to add the relational case *of Christ* or *of God.* Even in the NT *ekklesia* is used strictly politically. In Acts 19 the word occurs three times, referring to the mob that heard Paul in Ephesus. Verse 32 reveals that "the assembly (ekklesia) was in confusion." Verse 39 refers to Demetrius assuring them that matters can be settled in "the regular assembly" *(ekklesia).* Then verse 41 tells how he "dismissed the assembly," *ekklesia* again.

The early Christians might have chosen a religious term, such as *synagogue,* to refer to the community of Jesus, and this term was sometimes used, as in James 5:2 where the Christian assembly is called a synagogue. But when the same writer tells the sick man to call for the elders of the church he uses *ekklesia.* It is remarkable that the apostles, moved by the Holy Spirit, would reach out into Greek culture and choose a secular term to describe God's special people. But we are not to forget the influence of the Septuagint, with which Jesus and his apostles were acquainted, which had long since selected *ekklesia* as the equivalent of the "assembly of God" in the Old Testament.

To check ourselves to see where we may be at this point in our study we might suppose ourselves to never use the word *church* again or even to think in terms of *church.* For the moment let us think of "the communities of Christ salute you," "I take it to mean Christ and the assembly," and "feed the congregation of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood. " You no longer go to church, but to the assembly; you are no longer raised in the "Church of Christ" but were raised in the community of Christ. The elders no longer run the church but they run Christ's assembly. You didn't "join the church" but you joined the assembly. People are no longer told to go to the church of their choice but to the community of their choice.

There is a difference, isn't there? I tried this out on my dear Ouida and she concluded that *church* is more formal, more institutional, more organizational, more impersonal. We even speak of folk being "churched," but how would you say this in terms of the church as community. Severe terminology like "disfellowshipped" seems to fit with church, but not with assembly. There are "church fusses" and "church splits" and "their church and our church," but these notions do not transfer very well into community or congregation.

How does “under the oversight of the elders of the community” sound? It is much easier to have an hierarchy of authority in the Church of Christ than it is in Christ’s community. It makes sense to refer to the pope of the Roman Catholic Church, but we smile at the notion of a pope over the assembly of Jesus Christ. Then there are ordinances of the church, doctrines of the church, officers of the church, and then “church schools” and “church papers.” And on and on.

It is easy to think organization when we read “Upon this rock I will build my church,” but more difficult when we hear Jesus say he will call to himself an assembly or a community. And I am persuaded that “the churches of Christ salute you” does not mean the same to us as “the assemblies of Christ salute you.” We would be uneasy over changing our signs from *Christian Church* or *Church of Christ* to simply *A Congregation of Christians* or *A Community of Jesus Christ.*

It is also easier to undemocratize a church where there is an “authority” mentality than an assembly of equals. And there are grounds for supposing that *ekklesia,* coming out of Greek culture that gave birth to democracy, implies a democratic assembly. When Demetrius told the confused mob at Ephesus that their problems could be discussed in “the regular ekklesia” (Acts 19:39), he did not mean that the decisions would be made by some perpetuating board of elders or corporate executives that give account to no one, but that the questions would be discussed by all who cared to participate in a democratic way. When the Greek *ekklesia* had an election everyone had a vote!

The assembly of Christ certainly has its leaders, even its “elders and deacons,” but these are leaders among equals and not officers who lord it over others —“not as domineering over those in your charge but being examples to the flock” (1 Pet. 5:3).

The early disciples thought of themselves more as “a little flock” than as a church. This is what Jesus called them —“Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom” (Lk. 12:32). Jesus was their shepherd. This is different from being the church and looking to Jesus as head of the church. Jesus never referred to what we call *church,* and even *ekklesia* is referred to but three times in all four gospel records.

And they thought of themselves as God’s people in Christ, as God’s elect, as a chosen race, as a spiritual house, and especially (in Paul at least) as the Body of Christ. There is no “invisible” Body of Christ and no “triumphant” ekklesia. Jesus’ community is real and visible, whether in heaven or on earth, and it is always “militant” and not yet “triumphant”

in that it never ceases to fight the good fight of faith. Nor is the universal community of Christ the sum total of all the congregations, but rather each assembly is a manifestation of the whole body of Christ.

And yet it is all a divine mystery. “This is a great mystery,” says the apostle, “Christ and the assembly.” It is a relationship of “in Christ” or “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” And that is what the community of Christ is, a blessed and beautiful mystery. It is just as well that we can’t say the same for “the church.”

These conclusions do not mean that we should not use the term church, but they might mean that we should use the term less and the more meaningful terms more. And when we do refer to the community of Christ as *church* we can do so with more understanding of what the ekklesia of Christ really meant to those who first used that description. —*the Editor*

⁂ ⁂ ⁂

LET THE MORMONS HAVE IT!

At my side is an unusual book entitled *Divergent Paths of the Restoration* by Steven L. Shields. Since you are probably an heir of what we have come to call “the Restoration Movement,” some statements from this book will interest you, such as:

“For some reason as yet unexplored and unexplained, the Restoration Movement has shown a schismatic tendency from its very first.”

“There have been only a few rather broad and somewhat limited studies of the various groups in the Restoration Movement.”

“The Restoration Movement is growing, both in numbers and in groups. Someone should keep some kind of track of what is going on.”

These statements might well have been penned by some heir of the Stone-Campbell unity movement, but the author of these lines is a Mormon and he is talking about the Mormons. The author seeks to identify all the splinter groups among the Mormons, and he has found fifty of them, some of which no longer exist. But there are eight main groups of

Mormons (but only the Salt Lake City group, which is the largest, accepts that nickname), five of which have their headquarters in Independence, Mo., which is really the "holy city" of these people, according to their founding prophet, and not Salt Lake City.

Fifty different "Mormon" factions in 150 years of history! Mr. Shields lists the eight main groups in a special section he calls "Brief Summary of Eight Restoration Churches." The book is not anti-Mormon, but a factual account by a Mormon historian of how the Mormons have divided and subdivided.

Some of the factions resulted from disputes about the right name. Objecting to "Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints," one group in Independence (2,000 members) is simply the "Church of Christ," while another faction in the same city, with only 40 members, is the "Church of Jesus Christ."

The book tells of a journal emanating from Bountiful, Utah, which specializes in Mormon history. Its name is *Restoration.* The book makes clear that it is the Mormons who are the Restoration Movement, and yet it raises the question I ask in my own history of the Stone-Campbell Movement, *why is restoration ism inherently divisive?* Mr. Shields notes that the reason for this is "unexplored and unexplained."

There are of course still other restoration movements, such as the Plymouth Brethren, who are divided into eight different churches. They do a neat and simple thing. They number their factions Plymouth Brethren Church No.1, Plymouth Brethren Church No.2, etc.

Well, I am writing these lines to recommend that we let the Mormons have restorationism, the Restoration Movement, and all its attending baggage, including factionalism. Even though there are other restoration movements, the Mormons seem to out-restoration all other restorationists, so we should honor their claim and recognize them as *the* Restoration Movement.

If Churches of Christ/Christian Churches forgot all about the term "Restoration Movement" and never used it again they would lose nothing and would gain a great deal. The Mormons not only claim the term, but they deserve it. They *are* restorationists —all 50 of their factions —and this is why they can never be a force for the unity of all Christians. Restorationism and unity are antipodal.

Our heritage in the Stone-Campbell Movement is *not* restorationist. It was launched as a unity movement and not as a restorationist movement. The term "Restoration Movement" is of recent origin in our history, twentieth century, and it was not a term used by our pioneers. Stone and Campbell were reformers, not restorationists, and they referred to their efforts as "Reformation." Stone never used the term "restoration" at all, not even once that I have found, while "reformation" was a constant theme as he pled "Let Christian unity be our polar star." Campbell did use the term, especially in reference to "a restoration of the ancient order," but he did not mean by *restoration* what the Mormons mean. Campbell used it as a synonym for reformation, thus referring to his work as "the New Reformation."

The difference between restoration and reformation can be seen in the "revelations" of the Mormon prophet himself. Joseph Smith was troubled as to which church to join. The Lord appeared to him and told him not to join any of them, for they were all false churches. The story ended with the prophet "restoring" the true church since the existing churches could not be reformed. This is the essence of restorationism: the true church apostatized to the point that it ceased to exist on the earth, so some prophet or preacher, either with a new revelation or a "true" interpretation of the old revelation "restores" the true church revealed in the Scriptures.

I was taught this in the Church of Christ colleges I attended. The true New Testament church ceased to exist, "lost in the wilderness," and Alexander Campbell came along in the 1800's and "restored" it. Just like the Mormons, except we came up with a different kind of "restored" church!

Alexander and Thomas Campbell did not believe this. In their founding document, the *Declaration and Address* (1809), they wrote: "The Church of Christ upon earth is essentially, intentionally, and constitutionally one." This was two years before they had a single congregation, and yet they referred to "the Church of Christ" as a reality upon earth and not as something they expected to reestablish. Moreover, they referred to "uniting the Christians in all the sects," and to them *this* was the ongoing Church of Christ, those Christians in the sects.

Nor did they see the existing denominations as exactly "false," even if they were in need of reformation, otherwise they would not have had their first churches join denominational associations. The very first Campbell church at Brush Run belonged to the Redstone Baptist Association.

But restorationism (patternism and primitivism are synonyms) had its advocates in the Campbell movement, and this mentality gained a foothold and became a prime cause of the eventual split known as “Churches of Christ,” beginning in the 1880’s. The Churches of Christ continued to split. We may not have 50 factions like the Mormons have, but we probably run them a close second. This could be expected from the Mormons perhaps, but we began as a unity movement and it should not have happened with us.

The antithesis of restorationism is the doctrine of the inviolability of the church. One cannot be a Mormon or any restorationist and believe “Upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it.” If the true Church of Christ has always existed upon earth, standing impregnable to all the assaults of Satan, then of course there is no reason to “restore” it, though one might restore to the church things that are lacking. Believing in the ongoing, indestructible church, one would work with or for those organizations that most approximate what Christ’s church should be, hoping to bring them still closer to his likeness. This is renewal or reformation. The reformer calls upon the church (that does exist) to repent. The restorer ignores history and starts over, assuming he has “the pattern” for the one true church, which may call for baptism for the dead on one hand and acappella music on the other.

Our pioneers did not intend to start another church, but to work within the framework of existing churches. They were thus reformers. When they were at last forced out of the churches with which they worked they found themselves the creators of still another denomination, known as Disciples of Christ, Churches of Christ or Christian Churches. This Campbell accepted as a fact of life, and he had no qualms about referring to “our denomination.” That one denomination eventually became three, plus some subgroups. While this development would disappoint Campbell as any division within the church would, it would not change his basic intention. He would still insist that all unitists should work for the peace of the Body of Christ wherever they are. He would still believe, as we all should, that our Lord’s prayer for the oneness of his people will be realized.

The fatal flaw of restorationism is that it places conformity to a given interpretation (or method) above unity. A unitist allows for diversity, seeking unity in essentials. The Amish, for example, being restorationists insist upon a certain dress code, based on their view of “Be not conformed to this world.” When some would not conform, going so “modern” as to ride in automobiles, they had to become a separate sect known as Mennonites. If one does not conform to “the pattern,” which the New Testament is assumed to be, he must be excluded as unfaithful.

Mormonism with its 50 sects is a ghastly demonstration of restorationism. Not only does the one, true Mormon church reject all other Christian communities as false, but all 49 other Mormon churches are likewise rejected.

This is what they call “the Restoration Movement.” I suggest we let them have it. The rest of us should seek to be a part of the worldwide Body of Christ, which is made up of all Christians. And we should realize that Christ’s church upon earth has never been all that Christ intended, not even in the time of the apostles. It needed renewal then and it needs renewal now. And that is our mission: calling God’s church to its true witness in the world, which is to proclaim the gospel of Christ for the healing of the nations, and this with a united voice. If it is true that a united church can win a lost world, as Jesus indicated in his prayer for unity, it has to follow that a divided church cannot.

Our own heritage is such that we must insist that *Unity is our business!* Let restorationism be the business of the Mormons. They do it well. —*the Editor*

To do so no more is the truest repentance. —*Martin Luther*

⁂ ⁂ ⁂

WINE AND THE DISCIPLE

Cecil Hook

Wine was a common commodity in ancient life, mentioned over 250 times in the Bible. All of the wine was not used by bad people. Because of prejudicial notions which are held and expressed so strongly, it has been difficult to bring an objective lesson on the use of wine. For many, the only use of wine is no use, and those people usually question the motives of anyone who justifies any use of wine, often accusing him of being a drunkard or condoning drunkenness.

We should be candid in our investigation of the subject. We gain nothing by being evasive, illogical, inconsistent, or dishonest about it. An incident in a Vacation Bible School class which I once taught in a neighboring congregation illustrates our evasiveness. We were studying this subject. To warn against use of wine, a kind and lovable elder of advanced age read Proverbs 31:4-5: “It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to

drink wine, or for rulers to desire strong drink; lest they drink and forget what has been decreed, and pervert the rights of all the afflicted. “ After he made his point, a young woman inquired, “What do the next two verses mean?” So he read: “Give strong drink to him who is perishing, and wine to those in bitter distress; let them drink and forget their poverty, and remember their misery no more.” Having never considered that there was a proper use for wine, he became confused and embarrassed, and he was unable to give a coherent answer.

The first mention of wine in the Bible tells about Noah who “planted a vineyard; and he drank of the wine, and became drunk...” (Gen. 9:20t). Other liquors are not mentioned in the Bible, but they are referred to as “strong drink.” Methods of making distilled liquor had not been invented. Spiced wine was called “mixed wine.” Noah got drinking off to a bad start.

Plenty of wine indicated prosperity and blessing. “May God give you … plenty of grain and wine” was the blessing of Isaac upon Jacob (Gen. 27:28; see Deut. 7:13; Amos 9:14). When David said, “My cup runneth over,” it is not likely that he was referring to goat milk!

Melchizedek, priest of God Most High, brought bread and wine to offer Abraham when he returned from battle (Gen. 14:18).

A part of the Levitical priests’ portion was the best of the vintage (Num. 18:12). The priests were to offer upon the altar day after day the fourth part of a hin of wine for a drink offering (Exo. 29:38t). (A hin was about *6 1/2* pints.)

The people were to tithe their wine along with their other produce (Dt. 14:23).

Levites had charge of the stored wine at the Tabernacle (1 Chron. 9:29).

“Say to the people of Israel, when either a man or a woman makes a special vow, the vow of a Nazarite, to separate himself to the Lord, he shall separate himself from wine and strong drink; he shall drink no vinegar made from wine or strong drink, and shall not drink any juice of grapes or eat grapes, fresh or dried” (Num. 6:2f). Such abstinence from grapes and wine was not required of all persons. After the Nazarite had fulfilled the vow, “the Nazarite may drink wine” (v. 20).

Priests were forbidden to drink while in service: “Drink no wine nor strong drink, you nor your sons with you, when you go into the tent of meeting, lest you die” (Lev. 10:8f).

The references above show that there was a proper and approved use of wine that holy men of old could enjoy. There are many warnings given against drunkenness, and there are ugly scenes involving strong drink. We are so familiar with those that it is superfluous to recite them here. But to incriminate righteous men and holy institutions in their use of wine because of the abuse that sinful, intemperate men displayed is unjust and slanderous.

Looking into the New Testament writings, we observe that the same attitude toward wine prevailed. For the moment, we will pass over all the many references which warn that a drunkard definitely will not inherit the kingdom of God. Let us consider the attitude that Jesus and Paul had toward the use of wine. They were by no means total abstainers.

Jesus used an illustration that the Jews understood readily when he talked about putting new wine in old wine-skins. The juice expands only while fermenting. If fermenting juice was considered sinful to them, his illustration would have had an evil connotation to them.

At a wedding feast, Jesus performed his first miracle by turning water into wine (John 2:1f). In fact, he made about 108 gallons of it! And it was for social drinking! Was it just fresh grape juice? If any use of alcoholic drink is sinful, surely Jesus would have clarified that point then and there. Are we to say that the Holy Spirit made a bad choice of words which would easily lead people into a misinterpretation encouraging sin? I think not. Vacuum seal bottles are a modern invention. They had no means of keeping fresh grape juice, but by fermenting it, they could keep the juice as wine. I have read some fantastic claims that the Jews had some means of preserving “unfermented wine.” If they could do it, why can’t we? If someone will demonstrate that grape juice can be kept in any desirable state for drinking from summer until Passover in the spring without the benefit of cold, vacuum seal, or fermentation, then they have a plausible argument. To say that they drank diluted wine does not meet the issue, for, whether it be 2% or 16% alcohol, it still would be alcoholic. New/sweet wine was alcoholic (Acts 2:12).

Jesus drank wine in contrast to John’s abstinence: “For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine; and you say, ‘He has a demon.’ The Son of man has come eating and drinking; and you say, ‘Behold a glutton and a drunkard...!” (Luke 7:330. If he drank fresh grape juice only, would they have accused him of being a drunkard, or winebibber?

In his parable, Jesus pictured the Samaritan as pouring oil and wine on the wounds of a man for medicinal purposes. Oil and grape juice?

In initiating the Lord's Supper, Jesus used the cup which was a part of the Passover meal (Luke 22:140. It was too early in the spring for fresh grape juice. Following the pattern of Jesus and the apostles, the Corinthian disciples still had a meal as the setting for the Lord's Supper. Abuse of the meal resulted in the drunkenness of some: "For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal, and one is hungry and another is drunk. What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in?" (1 Cor. 11:21). Even though some got drunk, Paul did not forbid that any of them drink. He said that they had homes to do it in.

Even though Paul says that "the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking" (Rom. 14:17), many today would contradict him in maintaining that one who drinks cannot remain in the kingdom.

In defending the personal rights of Barnabas and himself, Paul asked the rhetorical question, "Have we no right to eat and to drink?" (1 Cor. 9:4).

Paul declared, "It is right not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that makes your brother stumble" (Rom 14:21). But he did not indicate that no one could properly eat meat or drink wine forevermore. Abstinence was considered to be right only when it damaged the faith of someone else. In similar setting, Paul indicates that a person might glorify God by his drinking: "So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31).

At Miletus, Paul had warned the Ephesian elders that some of their number would become divisive. Later, Timothy was instructed to expose and publicly rebuke those elders. That was quite a task for the young evangelist —enough to keep his nervous stomach in turmoil! So, Paul prescribed a tranquilizer for him, urging, "Use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and for your frequent ailments" (1 Tim. 5:23). That is the use suggested for wine in Proverbs 31:6f. That is the same use we make of sedatives and tranquilizers today. It served them as a pain reliever. I have seen many persons on their death bed, and, almost without exception, they were heavily sedated. For me to suggest that these good people died in a drunken stupor would be horrifying, but what is the difference in having senses dulled by alcohol or by some other chemical? These are in the realm of our liberty.

Is wine sinful? Sin is not in things, but in people. “I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean in itself …” (Rom. 14:14). To the pure all things are pure, but to the corrupt and unbelieving nothing is pure; their very minds and consciences are corrupted” (Titus 1:15).

The use of wine is a liberty of the disciple; however, this and all other liberties are limited by self control and by expediency. Paul expressed it in this manner: “‘All things are lawful for me,’ but not all things are helpful. ‘All things are lawful for me,’ but I will not be enslaved by anything’” (1 Cor. 6:12). Let us consider these limitations further.

By intemperance, we may become enslaved to most any good thing whether it be coffee, cola, sweets, sports, television, peer pressure, or wine. It is the loss of self-control that is sinful rather than the thing which is submitted to. The passages of scripture usually reviewed in support of abstinence all condemn the enslavement —drunkenness —rather than a temperate use of alcohol. Thus, Paul assures us that those who practice drunkenness shall not inherit the kingdom of God (Gal. 5:21). He even warns us not to associate with a brother who is a drunkard (1 Cor. 5:11). “Do not get drunk with wine,” he demands (Eph. 5:18). The elder is to be no drunkard, nor should the deacon be addicted to wine (1 Tim. 3:3,8).

Some sincere people contend that any amount of drinking makes one drunk proportionately; that is, if you take one drink and it takes two drinks to make you intoxicated, then you are one-half drunk. By the same rule, if eating two steaks would make you sick and gluttonous, then one steak would make you half a glutton, and driving thirty miles an hour would make you half a violator of law.

Drinking wine, or any other practice, is not expedient or helpful if it causes someone else to sin. Concern for the weak brother constrained Paul to declare, “It is right not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that makes your brother stumble,” and “Only take care lest this liberty of yours somehow become a stumbling block to the weak.” Cause the weak to stumble; not the pious to grumble. Were the righteous men throughout Bible history stumbling blocks or bad influences? Surely, concern for the weak did not take away liberty after the weak had been instructed and strengthened.

It is commonly urged that it is not expedient to drink any wine because it can become habit forming so easily. I respect that argument and the person who chooses to drink none. Some persons, because of their physical and psychological nature, must avoid all alcohol because they are alcoholics by nature even if not by practice. But most any good thing can

lead to sin if we do not exercise self-control, whether it be eating, sleeping, talking, driving, taking sedatives, watching television, or most any other activity within our liberties. We cannot abstain from life!

"You lose your influence with others when you drink." It is true that pious and judgmental persons will think less of you because you do not adhere to their scruples. Most unchurched people attach no stigma to you for moderate use of alcohol. The jibes we hear from them come when they see people drink who have so piously contended against it. They laugh at our hypocrisy whether it relates to the use of alcohol or anything else. The Protestant fundamentalists are the only religious people who have demanded total abstinence.

A factor of our modern times must be considered in determining expediency. Our mechanical age makes alcoholic use more dangerous for such activities as driving a car, operating heavy equipment, or performing work which demands precision and quick reflexes.

This brief treatise does not touch on all areas relating to the use of wine. Usually, one who makes any defense of our Christian liberty is considered as the Devil's advocate; hence, we do not hear many lessons about it or see preachers' names signed to many discussions of it. To preach on it is to commit suicide in the pulpit! The righteous spokesmen for God of old would be barred from our pulpits for repeating what they wrote on the subject and Jesus would be thrown out of the church if he made wine there or drank it at a wedding reception in the fellowship room.

⁂ ⁂ ⁂

ARE THERE ACCIDENTS IN A CHRISTIAN'S LIFE?

Life may have but few certainties, but those few make a great difference in how one views human existence. It is a comfort to me to realize that while we are surprised at the turns history takes, He who rules the universe is never surprised. Whether it is the fall of a sparrow or the rise of an empire, God knows all about it, *beforehand.* God is neither surprised nor shocked when an airliner crashes or when nations go to war.

He not only knows but He is also in control. However dangerous life may seem to be, the Creator still holds the reins. He is like the mother who wills that her child learn to walk. She knows he will take tumbles and hurt himself, which she allows for tile sake of

his development. But she takes precautions, such as removing sharp objects from the room, lest he be hurt too badly. The mother remains in control even if her child comes up with a bruised knee. She knows the child will be hurt, to some degree, in learning to walk, but she does not will that he be hurt. She allows it in that it is a necessary part of what she wants for her child, development.

And so God has placed us in a world of his design, even if he has not willed everything that happens. He knows we will take tumbles and get hurt, for that is how we grow in this world, but he is always in control in that he does not allow the world to become too much for us. He removes the deadliest obstacles from mankind's reach, thus allowing the drama of life to go on. Just as the mother knows her child will get hurt in learning to walk without willing it, so God knows all about the tragedies and heartaches that come our way without ordaining them.

If this is confusing it may be that we are deceived by the idea of time, which must be unreal. If God is the ultimate reality then there is no such thing as time. If to God a day is like a thousand years and a thousand years as a day, as the Scriptures insist, then he stands outside of time —and space. In terms of eternity time is meaningless, as is space. This is why we can all be together in the presence of God in heaven *with no space problem.* When the medieval divines talked about how many angels could stand on the point of a needle, it was not complete nonsense, for they were hinting at the non-temporal, non-spatial character of reality. Theoretically all the countless angels could stand on the point of a needle, for there is no such thing as space beyond our finite universe or universes.

Since we are tied to a temporal-spatial environment this is of course beyond our comprehension, just as God himself is. But we have occasional experiences that hint of timelessness, such as when we say to a new friend "It seems I've known you forever." Or the difference in "time" between a boring hour waiting at the airport and an hour watching an exciting movie. Who will say that such "time" is the same even though both embrace sixty minutes? These are hints that time is deceptive and unreal. We of course have our seconds, minutes, hours, weeks, etc., but these are only artificial measurements that make the logistics of life possible. Time may be seen as experience, which is the only reality. This is why time is meaningless to the insane. They have no conscious experiences.

This may help us to realize that it may not be important how long one lives in this world. It is the *quality* of life that counts, not the years, the *experiences* one has, not his longevity. One glorious "hour" (a scintillating spiritual experience) may mean more than a lifetime of drabness.

This may also suggest that death and tragedy are of little moment to God, who exists outside of time and space, though he always feels for us in our loss and sorrow. While an airline crash is devastating to us, it may be no more than earthy to God, for all those who "die" are not really dead at all.

And once the "dead" step outside time and space they would almost certainly elect to remain there rather than return to earth, though surely some, who made a mess of their lives and confront God in judgment, would want another chance. A newspaper headline would surprise most of the world, *Crash Victims Refuse to Return to Earth,* but not those of us who believe in a God who is the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end. Surely no one in eternity would choose to reenter the stuffy confines of space and time, except perhaps for another chance at life in this world.

Standing outside of time and space, God of course knows everything that happens before it happens. Except that there is no *before* with God. It is like a passing freight train, which seems endless to us as the cars pass before us one by one. Some cars are past, some present, some future. God sees all the train in one sweep. To God there is no past, present, or future. And here we have the most crucial certainty of all: *God already knows what our end will be and he will make it so.* Still we are free to make our choices. But since he stands outside time he knows what our choices will be.

What then are we to say about accidents? Does life have its chances?

The answer has to be *yes.* That God knows and that he is never surprised does not rule out chance. Life is full of chance and accidents. We live on the threshold of "the unexpected," and we can take heart that there are unexpected joys as well as unexpected sorrows. God knows if we are to have an accident the next time we go swimming (without willing it), but we don't. When tragedy strikes we can truthfully say that it was an accident in that it was willed by neither man nor God. And the direction one's life takes is largely a matter of the circumstance of chance. This is evident when you compare where and when you were born against the aborigines of Australia.

The schools you attended (or no education at all), the person you married (or did not marry), and your life's work have been largely determined by chance. Had you been born at a different time or lived in a different place you would have married someone else. You are at the wrong place at the wrong time and are injured in a terrorist attack. Chance. There is an accident on the highway or cancer strikes. Chance. No one willed it. It is the stuff of

the world. Jesus spoke of it when he said “In the world you will have troubles, but be of good cheer, for I have overcome the world.” He is telling us of the kind of world we live in, one full of troubles.

When an airliner crashes and kills hundreds, it is surely not the case that God spared the four or five that survived. It was chance. To God it may not be all that important that someone survives, though every believer knows that God can certainly spare whom he will, and perhaps he does sometimes intervene and spares one that would otherwise be killed.

No one can draw any limits on the God of heaven. He will do what he will do. And it may be that in any given case he may have caused (willed) two people to meet and marry, or he may have willed for you to enter a given profession or to live in a given city.

We can only say that in the light of the sources available to us —the Scriptures, nature, common sense, moral reason-that we do not have tq conclude that God wills (decrees, causes) everything that happens. He does however have a will for us in everything that happens. A heart attack! God did not cause it or will it. It is a part of our chancy, unpredictable world. But his circumstantial will takes over, which is that I respond to the crisis in simple trusting faith. Die or not, he is with me and he will bless me and give me the victory. He may use it to deepen and strengthen my faith and thus better prepare me for graduation to a higher level of service that transcends time and space.

This is the point of Christian faith. We are to be of “good cheer” in a troubled, chancy world. God does not promise us that he will deliver us from life’s tragedies, but that he will be with us. Like Jesus who strengthens us, we too can overcome the world.

This cannot mean that the world cannot hurt us, but that it cannot gain the victory. We remain in control and in the end we will win because we have surrendered our will to Him who rules the universe. So there is hardly any question but what we live in an accident-prone, chancy world, full of uncertainties. The issue is whether we will respond with childlike faith to him we call Father or whether we allow the world to sell us its false values. —*the Editor*

Should We Pray About the Weather?

As this issue goes to press hurricane Gloria threatens the east coast. Last night Pat Robertson prayed before millions on TV that God would redirect the storm out to sea. Is it not more appropriate to pray that we might respond with faith and courage to whatever life may bring? Weather is determined by natural forces, and it may be presumptuous to ask God to remove the fault that causes an earthquake or to quiet the fiery elements that erupt into a volcano. Why not just ask God to change the way he made nature? Would Pat ask God to spare Virginia Beach of a hurricane while Mexico City is ravished by an earthquake? Did Jesus pray about the weather or did he bear the brunt of the Judean sun and all the other elements? When he calmed the raging sea he was teaching that he is with us in the storms of life rather than that he will remove the storms. James says that Elijah's prayers *caused* a famine to begin and end, but it is not that way in the OT story. James interpreted like a good rabbi! Amidst a vicious storm Paul prayed for people but not about the weather. Had Pat been more like Paul he would not have to explain now that Gloria did not turn around. Prayer is for perseverance and not for escape. It is not a question of what God can do but what he does. One can of course pray about whatever is on his heart, but I doubt that it does any good to pray about the weather. — *the Editor*

⁂ ⁂ ⁂

OUR CHANGING WORLD

Ouida went with me on a speaking engagement in San Antonio during the summer. We did the river walk and dined on a canal boat with a host of business friends, many of whom have a strong Christian commitment. Grandson Ashley, now 10, flew with the two of us on another speaking date in Tampa, where we bathed in the Gulf and dined on lobster. It was something to see Ashley attack a whole boiled lobster with all the extras. He gathered shells along the shore.

I should inform you that Ouida, as might be expected, captured the Alamo while we were in San Antonio, the first time no doubt since those brave Texans yielded it back in 1836. While I was doing something else, she went to the Alamo, only a block from our hotel, and when she stepped inside the officials immediately evacuated the place. She

came up with some kind of story about the air-conditioner fouling up the air, but I am suspicious that there was more to it than that. Remember the Alamo!

In July, Ashley and I left grandmother home and went to the Ozarks by ourselves, which he and/or I have done for seven years in a row. Our dear friends and hosts. Dr. and Mrs. Robert Lane in Calico Rock, always take us canoeing on the White river. I spoke at the Church of Christ in this quiet little village the Sunday we were there. We drove on to Missouri to visit with Ouida's brother, a retired Navy captain who has a super-scientific pig farm. Ashley served as a midwife in the birth of pigs while there. On our way home we visited Christian friends in Conway, Arkansas, where I addressed the College Church of Christ.

A recent issue of *The Saturday Evening Post* presented an interesting, informative article on "Disciples of Christ-Going Their Way." The essay is so attractively done that the church's office is using it in public relations, one goal of the church being to become better known. You might request a copy by writing the Office of Communication, Box 1986, Indianapolis, IN 46206.

Buff Scott also wants his *The Reformer* better known, though it is still within its first year. The current issue has an article by Carl Ketcherside on how to quit smoking. The sub rate is only 2.00 for the year and the address is 1003 Pilot Ave., Cherokee, 10. 51012.

Minister John Wright of Burke Road Church of Christ in Houston, writing in the church's weekly bulletin, tells the story of how victims of the Japan Air Lines crash wrote love notes to their families during the few minutes they had before the end came. One wrote his son, "I'm counting on you," and went on to thank his wife for their years together. John suggests to his readers that if they see themselves using their last few minutes in such a way, they might just go ahead and say those things now, for they might not have a chance later on.

Cecil Hook, who has an essay in this number that you will appreciate, has published a new book, *Free to Speak*, which includes his elegant piece on "Lamentations of a Mediocre Preacher," along with 26 other pungent essays. The price is 4.95 postpaid. Order from him at 1350 Huisache, New Braunfels, TX. 78130. His earlier book, *Free in Christ*, is really having an impact with 5,000 copies distributed in less than a year, and it is free for the asking.

⁂ ⁂ ⁂

BOOK NOTES

Dorothy Pape has written an exciting novel about John the Baptist, *No Greater Born*, in which she explains why Jesus would say there is none greater than John and why John never joined forces with Jesus. The novel can be an effective device in exploring truth. You will like this one. 7.50 postpaid.

Pat Robertson and Bob Slosser have put together a worthwhile book dealing with principles or laws of the kingdom of God, entitled *The Secret Kingdom.* You will be impressed with its relevance to our world today. 6.50 postpaid.

The book by our President on *Abortion and the Conscience of the Nation* is worth having, not only because it deals with a crucial moral issue by a sitting President, but also because it has chapters by Dr. Everett Koop and Malcolm Muggeridge. Imagine a book like this coming out of the Kremlin! We Americans must count our blessings. 7.95 postpaid.

A book with such a happy title as *How to Live with Kids and Enjoy It* has to have something going for it. It tells how to talk to them about sex, how to deal with sibling rivalry, their peers, and how to understand kids better. 4.95 postpaid.

A new book on *How to Manage Yourself and Others* by Francis Szarejko, a man with experience in running a city, tells you how to help others by helping yourself. It deals with the difficult question of how to apply Christian values to your business. 5.50 postpaid.

Ben Alexander, a Christian Church minister, has had more experience with the occult than most anyone, for he was once a medium himself. His new book on *Out From Darkness*, which tells it all, will curl your hair. 5.50 postpaid.

If you would like to read something that makes sense of “the Rapture” and pretribulationism, as to whether the rapture is silent and secret, then we recommend *The Rapture: A Question of Timing* by William R. Kimball. You will at least be informed, which is something for these “end time” books. 6.50 postpaid.

The Stone-Campbell Movement: An Anecdotal History of Three Churches by Leroy Garrett is going into another printing. We are moving toward 10,000 copies sold, which is incredible for a book on church history, and it is not inexpensive a 21.95. But if you send us a check for that amount we will pay the postage and put the book in the mail to you the same day. Or you can earn a copy free if you get up a list of eight or more subs to this journal at 3.00 each (24.00).

The able craftsman who binds this journal into bound volumes a small shop operator, has had health problems, and so *The Doe of the Dawn*, the bound edition of this journal for 1983-84, has been delayed. But we are hopeful of sending the copy you ordered sometime in October. It is not too late to order, and you need send no money. We will enclose an invoice with the book since we do not yet have the exact price.

Please when ordering books do not ask us to bill you. Since the above prices include postage it is no problem to figure the correct amount.

Tract of Interest

At my side is *For Restoring the Restoration*, which is "A Call for Unity Based Upon Love and Tolerance," which is a 15-page tract written under a pen name, which may suggest that it really says something. It concludes with "Let us restore the restoration, remove ourselves from the dictates of small legalistic thinking. Let us change the face of the 'Church of Christ,' where it is a small clannish group, dividing and splitting hairs, into the ecumenical 'Church of Christ,' as Christ prayed we would be." You may get two copies for a dollar from Ernst Diener, Box 26044, Ft. Worth, TX 76116.

History Book Commended

These recent comments, from white and black brethren alike, may encourage you to read *The Stone-Campbell Movement* by Leroy Garrett.

Just a note to tell you how much I have benefitted by your book, *The Stone-Campbell Movement.* It is a moving experience to read it. You almost place a person back in the days when the events transpired. Accept my thanks for doing the people who are the heirs of the Restoration Movement such a glorious favor. *—Ivory James, Jr., West Palm Beach, FL*

Your book is excellent. May you be blessed for your work toward unity. *—Jerry Veatch, Lyons, KS*

But a commendation that transcends anything the publisher or I could have expected is an offer by a physician in California to send the book free of charge to any preacher within the Movement *free gratis*, the only condition being that he will promise to read it within sixty days. This has called for a special printing. Assuming you are not a preacher, we can send the book to you for 21.95 post-paid if you send a check with your order.

When you send us a change of address be sure to send both your old and new addresses, for we locate you in our files by zip code and not by name.

Our most appreciative readers are often introduced to the paper by someone who is thoughtful enough to send us their name. In clubs of four or more, new or renewal (including your own) the sub rate is but 3.00 per year per name. You might well bless someone who longs for a deeper and broader fellowship. Single subs are 5.00 per year; 8.00 for two years.

RESTORATION REVIEW
1201 Windsor Dr., Denton, Texas 76201

⁂ ⁂ ⁂

READERS' EXCHANGE

Since we have no hierarchy to make policy for the denomination, everyone should be made aware of unity meetings and invited to attend. In fact the quickest way to accomplish the goal would be to throw them open and find out what people really think. Our leadership has equated silence with assent. I believe that all is needed is for the rank and file member to find out what is going on and they will come out of bondage.-Adelle *Bowen, Farmington, NM.*

I was deeply touched and shed tears as I read about your visit and tribute to brother Tillet S. Teddlie and our beautiful heritage. Brother Teddlie may have given us much more by his songs that bind us together than many of so-called “great preachers” that have driven wedges to divide us. God bless this wonderful man. —*Bernie Crum, Flat River, MO.*

It is lamentable that the Sand Creek convention occurred. How abhorrent that such a superior attitude could be assumed that one who had truly become a Christian, regardless of the error into which he may later fall, “that we cannot and will not regard them as brethren” (as the Sand Creek edict declared). In our discussion with Baptists on apostasy we have argued that one continues always to be a child of God, though he may be a wayward one. If one is a child of God he is my brother, even though an “erring” one. As Carl Ketcherside says, “erring” brethren are the only kind I have! —*Waymon D. Miller, Tulsa, OK.*

I did not renew because my eyesight was bad, but now I can read again. I enjoy the magazine. Just for the record, I am Baptist. —*Alma Creighton, Benton, AR.*

While I am from a liberal Lutheran Church, I am not very liberal. A few years ago I was born again within my own denomination, though it was not through the regular programs. The Holy Spirit is now free to work in my life. I see that your people are also beginning to be more open to less prescribed programs. We could all learn much from each other if we could get out from under all the clouded domes of isolationism. —*Richard S. Hovet, Bellevue, WA.*

⁂ ⁂ ⁂

Address all mail to: 1201 Windsor Dr., Denton, TX 76201*

RESTORATION REVIEW is published monthly, except July and August, at 1201 Windsor Drive, Denton, Texas. Second class postage paid at Denton, Texas. SUBSCRIPTION RATES: $5.00 a year, or two years for $8.00; in clubs of five or more (mailed by us to separate addresses) $3.00 per name per year. (USPS 044450). POSTMASTER: Send Address changes to RESTORATION REVIEW, *1201 Windsor Dr., Denton, Texas 76201